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THE MAYANS

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LIVE VIGOROUSLY

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LIVE VIGOROUSLY

THINK VIGOROUSLY

PERCEIVE VIGOROUSLY

PLAN VIGOROUSLY

FEEL VIGOROUSLY

WORK VIGOROUSLY

BELIEVE VIGOROUSLY

BELOVED CENTURION:

You have noticed in your more recent lessons that your Instructor has put a great deal of emphasis on those things that you can do to improve your life, which, of course, is what you have set out to do. This is the reason you became a member of The Mayan Order. God has given you wonderful tools with which to work, and the Instructors are preparing your lessons in an effort to show you how to gain the utmost results from these wonderful tools with which you are endowed.

This lesson discusses these qualities with you in detail later in its pages. It explains that living vigorously does not mean going at "break-neck speed". One can live vigorously even though some of life's tragedies have robbed him of his ability to walk. Living vigorously in every department of your life means more.

For example: A young lady of my acquaintance and whom I have been privileged to help is a victim of Polio, a beautiful young mother who was stricken in the flower of young womanhood. But she is leading a happy and useful life although she cannot use her legs or arms or hands or feet - she can only turn her head from side to side. With all this, she manages to live a vigorous life, is interested

in all that goes on about her, and even manages to write articles on the type-writer by use of a mechanism that she holds between her teeth. She had never had any experience in writing, and few people would attempt it even with all their capabilities in normal, healthy condition. She never complains, and a smile is to be seen on her face most of the time.

Once, when I had planned making a visit to her home, I asked a friend to accompany me. This little friend said, "Oh, Miss Dawn, I believe it is better that I not go, for seeing her would depress me." My reply was, "Oh no, it would not depress you at all. Please come." So, finally, she consented to go and after she left the house of this young lady, the friend said to me, "I feel completely inspired through having seen this wonderful person. I wouldn't have missed it for anything."

So you see, Dear Student, the life of this Polio victim is one that is lived vigorously. She has learned to Perceive Vigorously, Feel Vigorously, Think Vigorously, Plan Vigorously, Believe Vigorously, and even Work Vigorously. And as you go forward with this lesson and study it, you will find many ways in which you can put vigor into every department of your life.

Your Instructor is enthusiastic about this group of lessons that deals so completely and personally with YOU, and it is my sincere prayer that you will benefit richly from our instructions. Let us ask our Heavenly Father now to help us in our efforts to absorb the material set forth, ~~which we feel can mean so much to you in your progress:~~

PRAYER

Prepare me, Heavenly Father, to put my best effort into every thought, word and deed; that the sum of it all may be a maximum life. Amen.

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LIVE VIGOROUSLY

Two of the most repelling words in the English language are "sluggish" and "sluggard". They are both derived from the name of the slug, a half-alive, unfeeling, unthinking, inactive creature. They indicate that there are people who have its qualities, and accomplish just about as much. They are not very happy, for they do nothing to make themselves so. They are not very healthy, for they do nothing to keep the processes of life active.

One of the most wholesome words in the language is "alert". It means the opposite of "inert", and refers to something alive and in motion. In a person it means one who is responsive to things and conditions about him, who expresses aliveness in effective action. Such people are happy because they satisfy the urge to creativity. They are usually healthy because they do not let their abilities decline and decay.

This lesson is about the advantage and benefit of belonging to this second group. Let it be clear from the start, however, that to be alert one need not be an athlete or rush through life at a pace too fast for him. Many alert people go about in wheelchairs, or occupy beds of invalidism, or are too old to keep up with the more active ages physically. But they are bright and full of life, and all who come into their presence sense vigor in their talk and spirit. It helps keep them going. Had they been sluggish they would not have done so well.

Nothing will be suggested here that you cannot do, and there is not one who will not benefit in strength, happiness, and well-being by carrying out these principles in some way adapted to his situation. Like most of the rules of happy living, they are free, easy, and available to all.

You know that really being alive means more than merely being animate. It is possible to be physically alive in degrees - ten percent, twenty-five percent, fifty percent, or any fraction of making full use of one's powers in the sense of eagerness, enthusiasm, and effectiveness. As Philip James Bailey has said, "Life's more than breath and the quick round of blood. It is a great spirit and a busy heart."

Take complete advantage of the blessed fact of being alive. Let your life, in plan and action, extend itself and build out toward the limit of its privileges and possibilities, like a leaf pushing out its growing edges till it has accomplished the complete possibilities of its leafhood, or a rose budding and unfolding till it has become all it was created to be. ~~These silent and stationary children of Nature do not allow their lives to be limited by their situations, whatever those situations may be, nor do you need to. Wherever Life has placed you or may place you, let your life express its fulness there. Your mission may be elsewhere or it may be to improve the corner where you are.~~

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PERCEIVE VIGOROUSLY

You have five recognized senses with sense organs marvelously made to implement them. To these we shall add a sixth after we have referred to the vigorous use of these five. Through these senses we perceive the outside world. Unused they would weaken, just as a muscle will. Sluggishly used they will continue to exist, but with little purpose and no development. Vigorously used they will not only give better service but will also gain strength and keenness.

Use your eyes vigorously. Do not just look. See, and know what you see so you can recall it or describe what it was. Do not stare into emptiness and thus weaken your power to focus your eyes. If you look at all, look at something. Close your eyes and let them rest when they need it, but when they are open use them. Cultivate a steady gaze, especially into the eyes of other people.

Listen vigorously, that is with complete attention. The ear is less sensitive than the eye, but it can report atmospheric vibrations to you in terms of sound as the eye reports light waves to you in terms of form and color. Whether

you have a keen ear or not, listen, and it will become keener. Note sounds and distinguish them clearly. Be accurate in your recognition of them. Be able so to tell about them as to make others hear them in imagination. You will find that this will both enrich life and extend its possibilities.

Use your sense of smell vigorously. Added to the senses of sight and hearing, it will make the flowers, the new-mown hay, the trees, the fields lying under the mists of an autumn night, and a thousand other things more enchanting. It will also serve to warn you of the undesirable and the dangerous. Learn to recognize injurious elements by scents in the air. Do it vigorously, and you will do it better.

Use your sense of taste vigorously. It will help you to enjoy your food and thus have a good digestion. It will help you more fully to appreciate any special delicacies that come your way. It will help you to choose the good food and to avoid the undesirable. Be conscious of the pleasant tastes when you eat. Do this every day. It will add to the pleasure of living and the blessing of health.

The sense of touch is a helper for your eyes. It tells you of things you cannot see in dark places and less visible things you must handle and use in your work. It can help you to avoid injury, pain, or danger. The blind even have to use the touch sense instead of vision. Keep your fingers sensitive by using them with the vigor of care and attention.

The sixth sense we mentioned above is the sense of the unseen - immensity, eternity, friendliness, love of country, relation to loved ones, and countless others, including the Great Unseen we call God and the love He constantly radiates to us. The exercise of this sense opens another and far vaster world to us, but it must be used to keep it responsive and dependable. It will add untold scope, richness, and satisfaction to your life, for as St. Paul says, things seen are temporal, but things not seen are eternal. This is a spiritual sense, of course, but there is such a thing as spiritual vigor too.

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FEEL VIGOROUSLY

Two things help us especially in the living of vigorous lives, lives with an impact, lives that count; and they are therefore phases of vigorous living. One is to have a good, strong, healthy set of emotions, that is to feel vigorously about things. The other is to keep those emotions under control and harness them for the doing of worthy and constructive things, which is what they are mostly for.

Let us consider briefly what an emotion is. The word itself usually tells the story. The word emotion comes from two Latin words which mean together out-moving, or something which goes forth. An emotion is a feeling, but it is more than a feeling. It is a feeling with a drive in it, a feeling that causes us to do something reaching outside ourselves. Think this over carefully, and you will

find that it fairly bristles with meanings.

Some emotions, very necessary for their intended purpose, can yet be overdone and become sources of harm. Fear is intended to give us just enough of a push to remove ourselves from danger and to do it quickly, but too heavy a dose of it makes us cowardly and weak. Worry is intended to stimulate us to take intelligent and effective action about something that is wrong or out of control, but overdone it makes us gloomy and pessimistic. Dislike is intended either to stimulate us to make friends with a possible foe or to keep out of his way, but exaggerated, it develops into hate and does the hater more damage than the hated. It is the same with anger, and similar feeling drives.

Such feelings are automatic, so we need to keep watch on them. They are triggered by the endocrine or ductless glands. When one sees or hears of, or thinks about a challenging situation, the mind quickly orders the appropriate set of glands to throw into the blood stream their special secretion quickly to stimulate the right set of muscles to meet the situation actuated by the proper set of nerves. The order may be to run, resist, placate, and so on. Like most powerful drugs, these secretions are poison. The right amount gives the needed stimulation but excessive amounts lead to such results as we have already mentioned and gives one a case of auto-intoxication which does him temporary or permanent harm. That is why we have pointed out that one should have strong, healthy emotions but always keep them under control. Read this paragraph again; it can have a far-reaching effect upon your health.

With the higher, or spiritual emotions, like love, faith, hope, loyalty, pity, and the like, it is different. In their case we no doubt have a stimulating mechanism somewhere in our makeup, just as we have for reason and insight; but when we study them we can only conclude that, like the brain, they have a higher force that uses them for channels of feeling that are above the physical level.

In these higher emotions is our hope for good lives for ourselves and for the final realization of divine rule in human society. Yet, sometimes even they have to be controlled to keep them from getting into confusion and branching off onto mistaken roads. It has been said that a good life is one guided by Reason and motivated by Love.

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THINK VIGOROUSLY

This seems an appropriate place to notice that thought is another place to apply our rule of vigorous living and to observe that one highly important facet of it is to think vigorously. Vigorous thinking is needed in the control, concentration, and direction of all the other phases of living, including the emotions. We need thoughtfulness in everything we do, but whether our thinking is strong, weak, or negative, the quality of what we are doing will undoubtedly be controlled by it. Put force into your thinking. Let it show vitality. This force will combine with intelligence to produce power.

There are certain thought habits that are destructive of vigorous thinking and the ability to do it. One is reverie. It is well enough to have our moments of remembering and wondering, but even they should be vigorous moments and not times when we let the mind slip into needless, aimless, futile drifting. This habit is weakening both mind and living.

Another debilitating mental habit to avoid is listlessness. The real meaning of this word is thoughtlessness, but by usage it has come to be understood as a kind of weakness and laziness of mind. It really means emptiness and purposelessness of thought. However strong and active the thought process is at other times, while it is in possession there is simply nothing there. This kind of mental activity (or lack of it) is easy to do, but its consequences are not easy to take, for they too are empty.

A special danger to vigorous thinking should be warned against here: Never suppose that vigorous thinking means imperious, dogmatic, opinionated thinking. That kind of mental activity really comes from ignorance trying to justify itself with over-positiveness and noise. The last resort of an unjustified position is violence, but the next to its last resort is a storm of empty words. A really vigorous thinker does not need to be overbearing. It is enough to be right. Speak the truth and let it stand. No power on earth can destroy it.

Vigorous thinking is thinking with conviction. It was the spirit in the early discourses of Jesus that caused the common people to hear Him gladly because ~~He spoke with "authority" and not as their formal-teachers did. He knew what He was saying and the people knew what He meant.~~

These things are needed in vigorous thinking and speech. First, be right about it; second, think it through with clearness and force; third, express it as one who believes it profoundly.

The confusions, misunderstandings, arguments, and their consequent losses and sorrows in our lives, come largely from the abundance of slipshod talk and failure to keep our speech within the limits of vigorous thinking in its best sense. Wherever there is disputing and debate error is involved in some way. There can be no difference of opinion between people who know the facts.

Keep your mind on the track. Feed it well. Keep it well-furnished. Train yourself to express it well. Then live by the conclusions it enables you to make. That will be following the path of wisdom.

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PLAN VIGOROUSLY

A few things in a lifetime will fall into place and work out in orderly fashion without previous thought or plan, but not enough of them will do so to build a life. Most things that work out well do so by design. They have been planned and the necessary effort has been made to realize the plan. Even a life

submitted to divine providence, which is certainly something to be approved and recommended, needs to be planned in submission to the divine will, for all God's works show that He is the greatest planner of all.

It may be that the present section of the present lesson could well have been headed Plan Daringly, but for our wish to keep the captions in a uniform pattern. Such a title would at least have come very close to its meaning. Many of us who plan with considerable vigor are still not courageous enough. We make our plans too small, so that however vigorous they may seem as far as they go it does not take very much vigor to carry them through; and when they have been carried through we have not accomplished enough to do credit to their possibilities.

Of course you have to do your work and therefore to make your plans within the limits of your situation and capabilities, but there are many instances of people who have made a great deal of their lives in spite of all kinds of handicaps, showing that it is both easy and common to over-rate our difficulties and under-rate our capabilities. Many of these people who have surprised both themselves and others have been both the healthier and the happier for it. Think, for instance, of the disabled muscles, limbs, and bodies of Polio victims that have been rehabilitated not by surrender but by the daring of gradually increasing use.

There is an old poem to the effect that one who produces a good loaf of bread has accomplished something really important. Fanny Crosby could not see, but her songs planted faith in the hearts of many people who could see, or thought they could. Think what Charles P. Steinmetz accomplished with his poor twisted body. Think how many people in one way and another have made their presence helpful and valuable even to the most advanced age. Some of them in the families of many of us were so gracious and wise and their very presence was worth so much to us that their final going left a very empty place in our world. Anyone, no matter what his handicaps and difficulties, can be a hero in spirit, like the girl I spoke of in the prologue of this lesson.

It seems that the people who have great courage always have great faith in God, in themselves, and in life. Consider those you have known and see if it is not true that they put the vigor of daring into their plans. They planned bravely, even when they would not have called it planning at all.

To plan vigorously and thus lay the ground work for achieving something of unusual worth and importance folks need a certain dedicated boldness of purpose. This enables them to have a wholesome attitude toward others in the home, the community, and even the world, and so they affect whatever is going on in all these boundaries of life. This is a recognition of the fact that whether we are in the drive of things or sitting at the window, each of us is a part of the entire sweep of things, and so we have the interest and incentive to make plans worthy of ourselves and have the inspiring occupation of carrying them into effect.

WORK VIGOROUSLY

The next thing we need after vigorous planning is vigorous work. By this we do not mean threshing wildly through life doing things at breakneck speed, racing the engine without getting anywhere, wearing ourselves out before our time, and spending great energy to little effect.

The people who accomplish most in the world do not do it this way. They know beforehand what they are going to do and how they propose to go about it. They undertake the enterprise calmly and get it done not by pushing themselves beyond their time and strength but by doing each thing as well as they can, so that each day, in fact each motion, means a real step toward the completion of the job. This, if real ability is put into it, is working vigorously because it is working effectively. This is a simple formula, but a workable one.

This is something good drivers have to learn when they begin operating motor vehicles. They discover that high speeds mean so much stopping and starting, speeding up and slowing down, getting around more careful drivers, and the like, that they not only wear out their motors and build up danger for themselves and for their passengers, but it actually takes them longer to reach their destinations than if they maintained a reasonable average speed with a minimum of interruptions and complications.

It is so in the lives we live and the work we do. Doing anything with vigor consists not only in using energy but in not wasting it. The person who works vigorously is one who puts just enough power into what he does to accomplish that particular thing. For instance, if one has a ten pound weight to lift and puts only seven pounds of energy into the effort, he fails and has to do it over. If he puts thirteen pounds of energy into it, however, he wastes three pounds of effort just the same.

In a whole task, a day's work, or a lifetime, this loss builds up to an important total, and avoiding it builds up to important gain. This will be found true in the case of anything we do. To put just enough energy into each effort is using vigor at its best. It is a sure kind of conservation, for we need to always remember that ability and precision are both actual forms of vigor.

It is not necessarily the worker who is tireddest at the end of a day who has accomplished the most. It is the one who has best matched his effort with the work to be done.

It may seem self-contradictory to speak of resting vigorously, but such a thing is possible, even important. It is the kind of resting one does after working vigorously, whether in sleep or conscious repose. After doing well something worth doing, one can really relax and let the gentle hands of repose rebuild his strength for future use, perhaps even increase his capacity and ability in the process. Uncertain and incompetent action works the other way. Threshing through sleepless hours or fidgeting in one's chair is hardly rest.

BELIEVE VIGOROUSLY

We close this lesson with brief attention to what lies at the root of the whole matter of vigorous living. Everything in one's life grows from what he believes. We do what we believe, and we do it the way we believe. We do not do what we do not believe. If we do not feel sure enough about a thing to take a chance on it, our attitude toward it is something less than belief. We may guess it, assume it, suppose it, or admit it; but we do not actually believe it. Belief is a single-minded, whole-hearted, enthusiastic, active, vigorous thing. Therefore, believe vigorously.

If beliefs were visible you could lay out side by side the things anyone believes, to which he has committed his mind, to which he has set his seal, and you would have before you a complete chart of his life and character. You would need to look no further to know what he does and is likely to do, because you would know what he is.

Of course you cannot do that with another person because you cannot see what he believes. But you can reverse the process. If you cannot tell what he is and judge what he will do by his beliefs, you can tell what his beliefs are by what he is and does.

If you can do this with considerable dependability in the case of another person because you can estimate his beliefs, you can do so with complete accuracy in your own case. You know what your actions, and therefore what your beliefs are. It only remains to relate the two, then if you are not satisfied with your actions, correct your beliefs to generate better ones. You can also undeceive yourself about what you really believe, for you do not really believe anything you do not do.

Always in this process your actions, good, not so good, or not much of either, will be as vigorous as your beliefs are. They will also be in harmony with them in every other way. You will do things just about as persistently, energetically, and faithfully as you believe it. Try to believe rightly and do it vigorously.

Belief is the starting point toward the possession of the mighty power called faith. It is even a measure of it. At the belief stage we do what we believe to the bounds of ordinary possibility, but at the faith stage we do whatever we believe in terms of infinite possibility. We find that possibility is measured only by our faith. Belief is in terms of known possibility, but faith may be in terms of seeming impossibility. Being vigorous enough, belief can move hillocks, but faith can move mountains.

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A certain man has lived a life of faith and has seen amazing things happen as a result. It all began on a day when, not knowing what faith was, nor what he believed, nor whether he believed anything much. He sat with hundreds of others in a college chapel. A national leader was speaking on making life mean most. The last

sentence was an imperative one consisting of two words, "Believe Something". This sentence fastened itself in the student's memory. He started building beliefs that snowballed into a faith, which in time became the measure of his life.

Take that sentence to yourself. "Believe something", and believe it vigorously.

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AFFIRMATION

I leave fullness and unconcern behind me, and accept the invigorating tonic of interest and enthusiasm. Thus I go forward living vigorously.

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Blessings,

Your Instructor.